

**AB (14/15)/###**

**EDINBURGH NAPIER UNIVERSITY  
ACADEMIC BOARD**

**DEVELOPING OUR ACADEMIC STRUCTURE TO SUPPORT STRATEGY 2020**

**Purpose**

1. The attached paper invites Academic Board to give initial consideration to proposals for changes to the University's academic structure designed to develop leadership capacity and improve accountability and decision making in support of Strategy 2020.

**Background**

2. Following the approval of Strategy 2020 by Court it is appropriate to review the University's structures to ensure that capacity and portfolios are aligned to achieving the objectives in Strategy 2020. ULT has considered options, set out in this paper, for a new academic structure which I believe will most effectively support the delivery of Strategy 2020 as we move into the early years of implementation.

**Alignment to Strategic Objectives/External Policy Driver**

3. This paper supports the delivery of the objectives and enabling actions in Strategy 2020.

**Equality Considerations**

4. An equality impact assessment is not required at this initial stage of discussion of the proposals.

**Communication Issues**

5. Following discussion by Academic Board and taking account of the Board's input, this paper will be developed as a basis for wide consultation on options for a new academic structure for the University.

**Recommendation**

6. Academic Board is invited to comment on the attached paper and to agree to take the proposals forward through formal consultation with staff and students.

Following consultation, a formal proposal for a new academic structure would be presented to the Board for consideration at its meeting on 5 December 2014.

**Andrea Nolan  
Principal & Vice-Chancellor**

**22 September 2014**

## EDINBURGH NAPIER UNIVERSITY

### DEVELOPING OUR ACADEMIC STRUCTURE TO SUPPORT STRATEGY 2020

#### Background and rationale

1. The University has agreed a new strategy to 2020. The strategic review we conducted during 2013/14 recognised and reaffirmed the historical strengths of the University but also recognised the recent relative decline in the University's performance. The focus of our strategy is therefore on actions which will grow our academic standing and reputation; contribute to a better experience for our students and grow income to deliver greater capacity to invest in that experience.
2. Our strategy sets ambitious goals structured around four key strategic objectives. Delivering these objectives will require agility and clear lines of internal decision making and communication across teams and functions; and optimal deployment of the University's human resources. Feedback from staff and students through the strategic review also indicated that there are opportunities to improve communication, remove barriers to collaboration, develop academic leadership, simplify processes, devolve decision making and further optimise the delivery of professional services.
3. The University's academic structure was established in broadly its current form in 2006, following a major review, with some subsequent adjustments in particular areas and management roles. Academic Board approved the 2006 structure on the basis that establishing three large faculties would deliver advantages in terms of efficiency, sustainability and a rich and varied environment and capacity for innovation.
4. The schools which were established in 2006 and by the subsequent merger of two schools in the Faculty of Health, Life and Social Science were likewise based on criteria of critical mass, sustainability and breadth of activities as well as academic coherence.
5. The Faculties established in 2006 have been successful in delivering growth. At the same time the schools have established themselves well, have demonstrated that they are resilient and sustainable and have the capacity to innovate and evolve to meet opportunities and changing circumstances. It follows that the objectives of efficiency, sustainability and capacity for innovation *could* now be delivered by the schools acting as the primary academic units of the University with a sharp focus on building academic reputation.
6. There is therefore an opportunity to consider whether the resources currently embedded in the faculties could be redeployed to strengthen the schools and corporate leadership, resulting in a more streamlined corporate management structure and a strengthened academic structure.

### Options for a new academic structure

7. It is proposed to consult on and, subject to that consultation, seek approval for the disestablishment of the three faculties with the consequence that schools become the primary academic units in the University.
8. In proposing to remove the faculty layer in the organisational structure our objectives would be to release resources and capacity for:
  - a. Cross-university leadership aligned to Strategy 2020
  - b. Academic leadership and capacity building in the schools
  - c. Further optimisation of the provision of professional services

while retaining:

- d. Academic coherence, sustainability and facilitation of inter-disciplinary working.
- e. Continuity and integration of professional services support for the primary academic units and the student experience.

and:

- f. Speeding up decision making with delegation of responsibility and accountability.

### Implications for school structures

9. Consideration may be given, as part of the consultation, to the desirability of making changes to the current eight – school structure. It is proposed that these discussions be guided by the following general principles:
  - a. Schools should be academically coherent
  - b. Schools should be large enough to be sustainable but with no expectation that they should each be of similar size.
  - c. Schools should have the capacity, including academic leadership capacity, to drive the growth in academic activity and reputation envisaged in Strategy 2020.
  - d. There should be a presumption in favour of the *status quo* except where there is a clearly demonstrated case for change.  
but
  - e. There should also be a presumption that the University will retain a single Business School given the requirements of accreditation and the importance of that brand.
10. If it is accepted that the University should retain a single Business School, two scenarios logically emerge. This could be achieved by merging the three existing schools within the Business School faculty into a single large school in the new structure. However, the increasing reputation and success of a number of small disciplines in the Humanities and Social Sciences across the University suggests that formation of a new school encompassing these disciplines merits consideration as part of the consultation process. If this were to be the outcome, disciplines such

as Law and Languages could fall into the new school rather than the merged Business School.

11. Two options for a future academic structure are therefore proposed as a basis for consultation – one with six schools mapping onto the current structure and one with 7 schools in which some activities would be transferred to a new “Humanities and Social Science” school.
12. Removing the faculties would also have implications for the internal structure of schools and the role of Head of School which should be considered in detail as part of the consultation process. For example:
  - a. Schools would become more outward facing.
  - b. Schools would subsume some of the functions of the present faculties with implications for their internal management structure and embedded professional services support which will need to be addressed with a view to avoiding increased costs and duplication.

#### Implications for committee structures

13. The disestablishment of faculties would have implications for the University’s committee structures including memberships which are defined in relation to faculties. If Academic Board approves a new school-based structure it is proposed that a review is undertaken covering all of the implications for University and School level committee structures and memberships with a view to bringing proposals to the March 2015 meeting of Academic Board.

#### Implications for the corporate management structure

14. As indicated in paragraph 8 above, an objective of these proposals is to release capacity for cross-University leadership aligned to Strategy 2020. Therefore and in parallel, proposals will be developed by the Principal for a new senior management structure which will deliver that capacity through new and redefined roles as appropriate.

#### Implications for professional services

15. If a new academic structure in which schools are the primary academic units is approved by Academic Board there would be a subsequent detailed consultation with relevant staff to agree the optimum approach to delivering professional services to support the new structure. The scope of that consultation would include:
  - a. The professional services support embedded in schools.
  - b. Professional services support shared between schools based at each campus.
  - c. The delivery of support to the schools by the central professional services.

16. It is not proposed that there will be any fundamental changes to the structure of the central professional service directorates as a consequence of the proposals in this paper.
17. Professional services, both those based locally and centrally, would continue to support the academic community of staff and students with a mixture of School, campus and central provision at the most appropriate level to provide efficient, flexible and resilient services.

#### Consultation and implementation

18. An outline timetable for developing the proposals, consultation, decisions and implementation is set out in **Appendix 1**. If, following consultation, Academic Board agrees a new academic structure it is proposed that implementation should be on 1 August 2015 with a transition period in respect of some elements potentially commencing in January 2015. The current academic structure would remain in place until 31 July 2015.
19. A small Project Board will be established, convened by the Vice-Principal, to manage the consultation and implementation processes. It is also proposed that an Advisory Board be established to support the Project Board and to include a wide range of stakeholders e.g. trade union representatives, the students' association, a representative of the lay membership of Court and members of staff who can add perspective from a range of roles and viewpoints.
20. A dedicated project support team has been established, drawing on existing staff resources to provide HR, communications and administrative support.
21. The ULT has committed to there being no compulsory redundancies as a direct consequence of these proposals and therefore role-holders affected by these proposals will have access to suitable alternative employment aligned to the strategy.
22. The ULT is also committed to incurring no additional recurrent costs as a direct consequence of these proposals.

#### Indicators of success

23. It is important that academic staff buy-in and are engaged with the process for implementing changes to the University's academic structure. The project must be implemented on time and within budget. Full and meaningful consultation will take place and the new structure will take effect on 1 August 2015. The new structure will support the achievement of the Strategy 2020: Building Success, and this includes:
  - a. Increasing our academic standing and reputation
  - b. Delivering an excellent, personalised experience for our students

c. Increasing income to deliver capacity to invest in the student experience

Andrea Nolan  
Principal & Vice-Chancellor  
22 September 2014

## APPENDIX 1

### Outline Timetable

Early September 2014	Initial consideration by ULT and SMF.
October – November 2014	Academic Board receives initial discussion paper on academic structure (10 October).  Start of consultation on academic structures.  Parallel development of proposals for a new corporate management structure.
December 2014	Academic Board receives a proposal on a new academic structure for approval.  Court receives any associated proposals for changes to the corporate management structure.
January 2015 – March 2015	Start of transition period in respect of Faculty - level roles and any new corporate management roles (January – July).  Consultation on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• professional services support for the new School and management structures.</li><li>• revised academic committee structures.</li><li>• the detail of establishing any new Schools</li></ul>
March 2014	Academic Board receives <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• proposals for a new academic committee structure and Board membership.</li><li>• progress report/final proposals on implementation of any new Schools</li></ul>
May 2014	Academic Board receives proposals for all academic structure matters not already approved in December or March.
1 August 2015	Implementation of new academic, management and committee structures.